better things may be made. These are—first, the necessity of a keener sense on the part of parents of the responsibility they incur by sending their sons to crammers without full inquiry as to the manner of life led by the students out of work-hours, and a determination that they will rather see them fail in every examination than trust them to the care of men who will not be responsible for their moral as well as intellectual welfare; secondly, the same keen sense of responsibility on the part of those parents who are crammers themselves, and a determination on their part to see that the sons of others shall have that help, counsel, guidance, and control which they would wish their own sons to have under similar circumstances.

Surely, if the competition-mania has not obliterated from the minds of parents all sense of the importance of such things as purity and sobriety, the crammer who is willing to undertake a higher standard of responsibility than ordinary, and whose success (in other ways than the number of passes scored) is proved to satisfaction, should have the first claim to the custom of all true parents.

Holidays in Lakeland Fifty-nine Years Ago.

LETTER No. III.

My Dear E,—This letter will be the last of my Lakeland recollections, and will bring me to the most eventful period of my life and that of my sister L., the summer of 1831, when I attained my sixteenth birthday, and considered myself not only grown up, but quite old. We were all once more assembled at Bowness, and our happy life on Windermere was in full swing when a change came o'er the spirit of our dream.

We four sisters were suddenly divided, never more to meet again with our fancies free.

Our eldest sister had married a naval man, and was called upon to pay the penalty of having done so. Her husband, when she least expected it, had to leave her and her first-born infant to take command of a ship on foreign service. Of course she was broken-hearted *pro tem.*, and must needs send for my twin-sisters to live with her during her grass-widowhood. I may as well mention here that this visit to the south of England ended eventually in their marrying two brothers in D——shire, one the squire, the other the rector of the parish. This was a happy arrangement for them, but not for me and my sister L., for we lost their dear companionship and half our boat's crew, and could only wander about disconsolate.

Fortunately just then an eccentric old bachelor who had a lovely place on Grasmere asked us to spend ten days with him, and our father and mother were glad of the opportunity of giving our thoughts a change, so we moved to pastures new. I wish I could give you an idea of Mr. B———'s house and surroundings, which were unique in their way. The house, something in the style of a Swiss cottage, was on a hill above the lake, and was approached by a succession of little terraces, connected by shallow steps paved with many-coloured pebbles.

These rendered the ascent to the house easy, and made pleasant resting-places under the shade of fine old trees, each flight of steps commanding a finer view of the lake and hills. I don't remember any regular front-door, but all the windows opened on the verandah and balcony. The rooms were the perfection of coolness, although the weather that summer was intensely hot, but Mr. B. knew the secret of keeping out the heat. Even his dinners were a cooling process; they are still associated in my mind with the best of cold food, perfect salads, green glass and iced wines, &c. Men servants he could not endure to wait at table. His butleress was dressed in black silk *(that did not rustle)* and white muslin, and the footmaid in a livery of black print and white linen.

Afternoon tea was an unknown institution in those days, but coffee—and such coffee!—was served in a curious place where the two staircases met, a kind of landing, fitted up as a small drawing-room, lighted dimly through stained-glass windows, and open to every breath of air. Divans and cane chairs were nice resting-places during the heat, and there we generally remained until the shadows lengthened. The bed-rooms were very small, and full of contrivances for utilising every corner, reminding one of state cabins on board ship.

L. and I thought our room charming, and we were hushed to sleep at night by the murmuring of a stream from the hill above running down to the lake under our window.

On our arrival we found our host in a very disturbed state of mind. He had a choleric disposition, and was something of a man-hater, and had an immoderate dislike to his privacy being intruded on by sightseers. They were few and far between in those days; now, their name is Legion and would have driven the old man mad had he lived to see them. During the previous week four Oxonians and their tutor had taken rooms in the village for the purpose of reading, save the mark! The day before our arrival they had called on Mr. B., sent up their cards, and requested permission to go over his house and grounds, having understood that it was the "show place" of the neighbourhood.

Could anything be more impertinent and insulting? We suggested that the poor young men never intended to be one or the other, but that made matters worse. It is needless to say that they were refused admittance, and in anything but civil

terms. The next morning Mr. B. found a large board nailed on a tree at his front gate—"No admission here except on business." Of course he was furious and made a correct guess as to the perpetrators of the joke. "I am thankful to say," he added, when describing his woes, "those detestable young men have gone off on a walking excursion. Had they not done so, I should have requested your mother, my dear girls, to confine your walks to the grounds unless she is with you." I'm afraid we did not feel sufficiently grateful for his careful attention, and indeed were rather sorry than otherwise that those dreadful Oxonians were gone away.

Have you ever heard of a pretty annual fête among the Lakes called a Rush-bearing? In case you have not, I will explain. When rushes are green and flowers beautiful the young girls of the place make crowns and wreaths, which are carried in procession round the parish, and the prize wreath or crown is suspended from the centre of the chancel-arch of the church for the following Sunday. As the rural festival was to take place while we were at Grasmere, my sister and I thought we would take a part in it, and see what we could do in that line. So the following evening we took Mr. B's boat and rowed to a bay below his house abounding in water-lilies, and amused ourselves by making two beautiful wreaths. It was a still evening and a lovely sunset, and, though we were happy enough, we both agreed that after the gaiety of Windermere our stay at Grasmere promised to be very *slow*. We had finished our work and were thinking of pulling to shore when the sound of oars far away accompanied by merry voices and laughter made us pause and prick our ears, so to speak. Nearer and nearer came the boat and its occupants, but before rounding the promontory that concealed our bay they shipped their oars, and after a short consultation we heard with delight the opening notes of that beautiful glee (or quartett, is it?)—"See the chariot at hand here of love, wherein my lady rideth." My sister's black eyes twinkled, and she whispered, "Those dreadful young men! they are serenading Mr. B——!" But she was wrong there, we afterwards heard; they were singing to please us and worry poor "Old Sammy," as they called him. Hearing that he had visitors they had changed their minds, and put off their walking excursion. I daresay you know the song they sang, so perfectly that we hardly breathed as the harmony died off at

the end—"O! so white, O! so soft, so sweet is she." Then, after a pause, pat went the oars on to the water, and round the point came the boat. Laughing and talking began again, but suddenly ceased as they caught sight of us, and they rowed quietly past and away like gentlemen. Our host was in a state of mind when we reached the house, for he, too, had heard the singing, and knew that his foes were still about. The next afternoon we went to the Rush-bearing, and after it was over we looked through the quaint old church. It was quaint enough, and alas! exceedingly dusty and shabby. A blessed change for the better has taken place in most country churches, however small and out of the way, during the last half-century, and I am thankful to have lived to see it. Now, I believe the church at Grasmere and its services are all that could be desired. At the time I am writing about it was full of little square pews, and Mr. B——'s was adorned with an arrangement of green silk curtains on brass rods. The next day being Sunday, the old gentleman took great pains to draw the curtains closely to prevent our being looked at. As we left the church the Oxonians sauntered in, and when we attended church the next morning, lo! all the curtains were carefully drawn *back*, and those dreadful young men were sitting very demurely in a neighbouring pew.

Would you believe it? Your grandfather was the culprit who thus made Mr. B——'s precautions of none effect.

During our few remaining days at Grasmere we occasionally met the reading-party, and every evening heard them, for they continued to sing on the lake, and we sat listening on the terrace steps while our dear father puffed away at his cigar. Once or twice we met them face to face, and tried to guess which voice belonged to which. Did the *fair one* sing alto (N.B—Your grandfather again, but he never sang a note, having no ear for music, only opened his mouth and pretended), the *dark one* tenor, the *stout one* bass, &c.?

However, all things come to an end, and we left Grasmere with much regret. We had not been ten days at Bowness before we heard that a party of gentlemen had got a regular racing-boat from Oxford, and intended to take part in the coming regatta on Windermere. The owner of one of the racing yachts occasionally gave us a sail to the head of the lake, and one afternoon when the wind failed us we had nothing to do but

drink tea and wait for a breeze to spring up. We watched a long boat coming down from Ambleside with evidently a racing crew on board, white flannels and the Oxford dark blue being unmistakable. Then it flashed on our minds that they were the reading men from Grasmere. Imagine our surprise when, instead of passing us, they came alongside the cutter we were in. There they all were and no mistake! The "dark one" took off his straw hat and asked the captain if he might take the liberty of coming on board, as he wished to speak to his aunt, Mrs. W——. My mother got very red, and we could hardly help laughing when he walked up to "Aunt J——," as he called her, with outstretched hand. A very few words convinced her that he really was her nephew and our cousin, and but for Mr. B——'s dislike to them all he would have claimed us as relatives at Grasmere. Their boat was still made fast to the "Dolphin," and our audacious cousin asked if he might take the liberty of introducing his friends. Captain S. asked them to come on board, and they were not long in doing so. We had a very merry tea-party, and talked over our various experiences at Grasmere.

You will not be surprised to be told that very soon the racing boat and her crew came to Bowness, and took part in all that went on, alas! for the reading. We seemed like old friends before we dispersed, and towards the end of the year the "fair one" and the "dark one" were with us in our Yorkshire home. Of course they came for me and my sister L——, but we were all young, and enjoyed three more happy summers at the Lakes in their society, before we settled down for life in our respective homes.

And now, farewell to old times and past joys. If you and your sisters ever find yourselves amidst the beauties of the Lake District, especially Windermere, Grasmere, and Rydal, think of the spring-time of my life. No doubt a great change has taken place since then. Homes that sheltered us have vanished, their owners and names forgotten, but the everlasting hills are exactly as they were; beautified by the same lovely lights and shades that our eyes, now dim with age, loved to gaze upon. But we can sit and think, not only of them, but with humble faith and hope of that glorious life to come that will endure for ever. May every innocent joy be yours, wherever you may be, prays your loving Grandmother.

M. H.